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ABSTRACT

This Ready--Set--Read Kit includes an activity guide for families, a 1997-98 early childhood activity calendar, and an early childhood growth wallchart. The activity guide part of the kit presents activities and ideas that families (adults who have nurturing relationships with a child--a mother, father, grandparent, other relative, or close friend) can use to help young children learn about language. The activity guide part of the kit divides activities into 4 age groups: young babies (birth to 8 months); crawlers and walkers (8 to 18 months); toddlers (18 to 36 months) and preschoolers (3 to 5 years). The activity guide concludes with a list of reading and writing play materials, the 40-item American Library Association's Suggested Book List for Young Readers, and 13 additional resources. The calendar part of the kit is filled with helpful tips and special activities that promote reading and language skills for young children. The growth chart part of the kit measures children's height and language development, and gives age-appropriate activities to promote language development for young children. (RS)

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ED 406 668

AMERICA READS CHALLENGE

READY★SET★READ

FOR FAMILIES

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Early Childhood Language Activities
for Children from Birth through Age Five

A Joint Project of the Corporation for National Service,
the U.S. Department of Education, and
the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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Corporation for National Service
Harris P. Wofford
Chief Executive Officer

U.S. Department of Education
Richard W. Riley
Secretary

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Donna E. Shalala
Secretary

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Dear Family Member:

Welcome to READY★SET★READ, an AMERICA READS CHALLENGE booklet that is filled with activities and ideas that you can use to help your young children learn about language. Families* are their children's first teachers. As a family member you begin teaching your babies about language as you welcome them into the world with smiles and caring words. You respond to your children's coos, babbles, early words, and simple sentences. By the time your children are preschoolers, they know a lot about language. You have spent many hours listening, talking, reading, and writing with them.

Most of the activities in READY★SET★READ are simple to do with materials found in your home or at the library. The activities can be added to your life at home as you and your children play, work, and grow together.

The activities are presented for four age groups:

- **Young Babies** (Birth to 8 months)
- **Crawlers and Walkers** (8 to 18 months)
- **Toddlers** (18 to 36 months)
- **Preschoolers** (3 to 5 years)

The ideas for one age group may also work for a younger or older child. Using what you know about your child's skills and interests can help you decide which activities to use. You can read the section for one age group now and save the others for later.

Children learn about language when their families:

- Listen and talk with their children a lot
- Read out loud to their children every day
- Keep reading and writing materials where children can reach them on their own
- Show children how they use reading and writing to learn, have fun, and get jobs done

Many children are early readers because they have learned from their families that reading and writing are worthwhile and useful activities.

On the next page are some simple tips to help you teach your young children about listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These basic, daily activities can make a difference in your child's language growth.

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* In this booklet "families" refers to all of the adults who have nurturing relationships with a child--a mother, father, grandparent, other relative, or close friend.

TIPS FOR FAMILIES AS THEIR CHILDREN'S FIRST TEACHER

- ❑ Talk with and listen to your children as you play and do daily activities together.
- ❑ Read with your children at a regular time every day and when they ask you.
- ❑ Take toddlers and preschoolers to the library so that they can choose books to read at home. Find out about your library's special books and services.
- ❑ Create a special place in your home for your children to read and write.
- ❑ Keep books and other reading materials where children can reach them. Add new books often.
- ❑ Keep writing materials such as washable, nontoxic crayons and markers, paints and brushes, and different kinds of paper where your children can reach them.
- ❑ Take books and writing materials for your children with you whenever you leave home, so that they can read or write at the doctor's office, on the bus, and in the car.
- ❑ Show your children how you read and write every day to have fun and to get things done.
- ❑ Point out to your children the printed words in your home and in the community.
- ❑ Encourage your children to do things for themselves when they are ready. Let them feed and dress themselves, and clean up after themselves even if these tasks take more time and are not done perfectly.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU:

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG BABIES

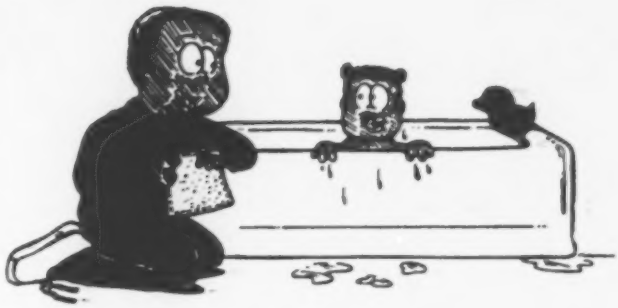
(Birth to 8 Months Old)

WHAT DO YOUNG BABIES DO?

- ❑ Cry, make other sounds, and move their bodies.
- ❑ Listen and respond to the sounds and voices around them.
- ❑ Coo, gurgle, laugh, and babble to themselves and others.
- ❑ Enjoy listening to stories.
- ❑ Smile when people smile at them.
- ❑ Respond to their names.
- ❑ Take turns while singing and playing with another person.
- ❑ Pick up objects with their fingers and thumbs.
- ❑ Move objects from one hand to the other.

HOW DO YOUNG BABIES LEARN?

Katie is in the bathtub splashing in the water with both hands. Her father sits on the floor next to the tub making sure she is safe. "Katie, Katie," he says as he picks up a washcloth. "Are you ready to play our special game?"



Katie looks up and sees her father's smiling face. She smiles at him and laughs. He says, "Let's play Peek-a-Boo," and puts a washcloth in front of his face. Katie reaches out and pats the top of his head. Her father says, "Peek-a-Boo, Katie, I can't see you." He lowers the washcloth so his eyes are no longer covered. Katie squeals with delight. He covers his eyes again and says, "Peek-a-Boo, Katie, I still can't see you."

Katie's father holds the washcloth out toward her, saying, "Your turn, Katie." She takes the washcloth from his hand and puts it in front of her face. Her father says, "Where's Katie?"

Katie drops the washcloth in the water and splashes with her hands. She babbles to her father, "Dadadada. Babababa." He says, "I think you're saying that you're tired of playing Peek-a-Boo. Let's play with your sponges."

Like many young babies, Katie is learning about language:

- ❑ She knows that it's fun to play with another person.
- ❑ She looks up when her father says her name.
- ❑ She smiles when her father smiles at her.

Katie's father helps her learn about language:

- ❑ He talks with her during a daily activity--bathtime.
- ❑ He says her name again and again so that she will learn to recognize it.
- ❑ He takes several turns in their game and then encourages her to take a turn.
- ❑ He responds to her babbles as if he knows what she is saying.

ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR YOUNG BABIES

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Listening and Talking Young babies make sounds and move their bodies. • Listen and talk to your baby throughout the day. Get to know the meaning of your baby's cries and gestures. Listen to the sounds the baby makes and watch the way the baby's body moves. • Take your time while feeding, diapering, and bathing your baby. Sing songs, say nursery rhymes, and smile and coo back at the baby's smiles and coos. In this way your baby will learn that you think what he or she says is important and that people take turns when talking with each other. How to help your baby's caregiver: Tell your caregiver how your baby communicates with the family. Explain the meaning of your baby's cries, babbles, gestures, and words. Ask the caregiver to tell you how your baby expresses his or her wants and needs.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Young babies listen to the sounds and voices around them. • Talk to your baby about what you both are doing and what he or she sees and hears. "I see you looking at your mobile. I'll touch it gently to make the faces move back and forth." • Tell your baby through your words and actions how much he or she is loved and valued. • Give your baby simple directions with words and gestures. Point, look toward something, or hold out your hand while talking to the baby. Ask, "Are you hot?" Then, lift up your arms and say, "Please lift up your arms so I can take off your sweater."

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Reading Young babies like being close to their families. • Many people say you should start reading to your baby at birth. Even though your baby doesn't understand your words, he or she loves to sit on your lap, hear your voice, and have special time with just you. You will feel relaxed and the baby will learn to think of reading as a pleasant activity. • Let your baby set the pace for your reading times. When the baby loses interest in reading, play a game, or do something else together. How to help your baby's caregiver: Tell your caregiver about your baby's favorite books and show your caregiver the words to songs and rhymes in your home language, so that your baby can feel secure at home and at child care. Young babies use all their senses to learn. • Babies are likely to crumple, shake, and chew books just as they do with other things. Look for soft cloth or vinyl books that can be washed. • Choose books with simple, large pictures or designs set against a solid background on each page. Ask your librarian to suggest books for babies, and look for children's books in good condition at yard sales and neighborhood bazaars.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Developing Muscles For Writing Young babies are learning to use their hands and fingers. • Help your baby develop hand and finger muscles. Place a simple rattle in your 3-month-old baby's hand. Hold out a sponge for your 5-month-old to grab. Give your 8-month-old a piece of paper to crumple. • Encourage your baby when he or she tries to do things such as pulling off socks and holding a bottle while sitting in your lap. • Play with your baby. Shake a rattle then hand it to the baby to have a turn shaking it. Hold out your hand so that the baby can hand the rattle back to you. How to help your baby's caregiver: Ask your caregiver what toys and materials your baby plays with at child care. Discuss often the new things your baby is learning to do without help at home and at child care.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
YOUNG BABIES: BIRTH TO 8 MONTHS OLD	Young babies are learning that they can make things happen. • Watch your baby to see what he or she likes to do. Provide play materials that match the baby's skills and interests. Offer toys the baby can use to make noise, such as plastic keys on a ring to hold and shake, soft toys that squeak when squeezed, a wooden spoon to hold and bang on the floor. • A cradle gym tied to a crib or playpen will encourage your baby to reach out and try to touch the items and make them move. Remove the cradle gym when the baby gets strong enough to pull it down.

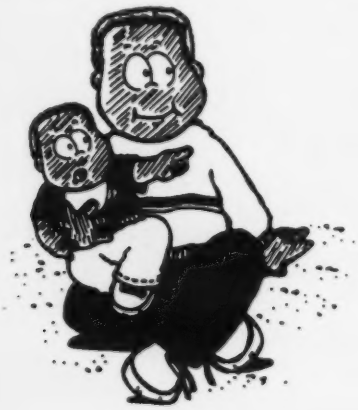
ENJOYING OUR COMPANY:

ACTIVITIES
FOR
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS

(8 to 18 Months Old)

WHAT DO CRAWLERS AND WALKERS DO?

- ❑ Use sounds and gestures to say hello or get attention.
- ❑ Point at things they want.
- ❑ Say a few simple words.
- ❑ Like rhymes and simple songs.
- ❑ Enjoy reading with a favorite person.
- ❑ Turn the pages in sturdy cardboard books.
- ❑ Put objects such as nesting cups inside each other.
- ❑ Fill containers with water or small objects, then dump them out.
- ❑ Hold large crayons and make marks on paper.



HOW DO CRAWLERS AND WALKERS LEARN?

Marcus picks up a book with cardboard pages and a duck on the cover. He puts the book in his mouth for a moment, then waves it in the air. Marcus looks at his big sister, Maria, and makes noises that sound a lot like words. Maria says, "Do you want to read? Bring the book to me. We can read together."

With book in hand, Marcus crawls to Maria. She lifts Marcus into her lap and holds the book so that he can see it. She points to the duck on the cover. "That's a duck. Let's see what's inside."

Marcus turns the page. He pats the picture and says something that sounds like words. "That's right," says Maria. "The baby is in the bathtub."

After looking at a few more pages, Marcus squirms and wiggles. "Okay," says Maria. "Have you read enough? Let me help you down." She puts Marcus on the floor and he crawls away.

Like many other crawlers and walkers, Marcus is learning about language:

- ❑ He knows that people will respond to his sounds and actions.
- ❑ He thinks it's fun to look at books with another person.
- ❑ He knows how to wait for his turn while talking and reading with his sister.

Marcus's sister, Maria, helps him learn about language:

- ❑ She responds to his sounds and actions as if he were saying words.
- ❑ She lets him turn the pages of the book.
- ❑ She talks to him about what he seems to be saying.
- ❑ She lets him find something else to do when he has lost interest in reading.

ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR CRAWLERS AND WALKERS

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	Listening and Talking Crawlers and walkers are learning that it's fun to be with other people. • Help your baby learn about taking turns the way people do when they talk with each other. Sing songs and play games such as Peek-a-Boo, hiding the toy under the blanket, and handing objects back and forth. At first you may have to take more turns than the baby does. • When your baby babbles, talk back. Make the same sounds the baby makes or teach new ones. • Respond when your baby wants to play a familiar game: "Oh good, you brought me the ball. Let's sit down and roll it on the carpet." Crawlers and walkers use gestures and actions to "talk" to you. • Respond when your baby shakes his or her head, points to something out of reach, or lifts his or her arms. Talk about what the baby seems to want to say. "Do you want to get out of my lap? Here's a wet cloth so you can wipe your hands." • Name the things your baby points to. "That's a *muffin*. Do you want a muffin?" Say the words for feelings and actions. "Aunt Nikki is *funny*, isn't she?" "I saw you *climb up* the stairs." How to help your baby's caregiver: Talk with your caregiver about the gestures your baby uses to ask questions, make requests, say hello, and get someone's attention. Ask the caregiver to tell you the words and phrases your baby seems to understand.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	Crawlers and walkers learn to say a few words. • Show your excitement when your baby begins to talk. Talk with your baby about the names of objects, actions, and feelings. • Look at and listen to things together with your baby. Talk about what you see and hear. "See the bird. She's flying up to her nest in the tree. Do you hear the truck? I'll lift you up to the window so you can see it." • Listen carefully to your baby's tone of voice. The baby may use the same word to mean different things. For example: Alphonso stands at the window looking outside. He asks, "Sandy?" Grandma says what she thinks Alphonso means, "Where did Sandy go?" Then Grandma answers his question, "Sandy went outside." • Let your baby know that you think books and reading are fun. Comment when you see your baby "reading." "Is the monkey in your book taking a bath? Does he splash in the water the way you do?"

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	Reading Crawlers and walkers can join in during story times. • Read with your baby every day. Babies enjoy short, simple stories, rhymes, and songs. Read the same books over and over, and also read new ones. Because your baby probably won't pay attention for long, it's best to read for a short while many times during the day. • Point to the pictures and name the objects. Ask your baby to point and name things, too. Smile, change your tone of voice, nod, and make faces when you read. Your baby will have fun copying your words and actions. • Let your baby choose the books and set the pace for reading. Read books with thick, cardboard pages so that the baby can turn the pages. You don't have to look at every page, read the whole page, or finish the book at one sitting. **How to help your baby's caregiver:** Volunteer to help the caregiver make a book about the things babies do at child care. Paste photographs or simple drawings on cardboard, cover with clear adhesive paper, punch holes in the cover and finished pages, and bind with a piece of string. Make new books during the year. Crawlers and walkers like to look at books on their own. • Provide books that appeal to your baby. Babies may like books with simple drawings and photographs of familiar objects, animals, and scenes from daily life such as taking a bath, eating, or playing outdoors. • Store cardboard, cloth, and plastic books on low, open shelves along with other safe toys. Encourage your baby to choose a book to look at and help your baby return it to the shelf afterwards.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	Developing Muscles For Writing Crawlers and walkers can use their fingers, thumbs, and hands. • When your baby learns to move a bottle or a toy from one hand to the other, hand a toy to the baby and say, "Now give it back to me." • Provide toys and household items that the baby can put together and take apart, fit inside each other, or fill and empty (e.g., large plastic snap beads, a set of plastic measuring cups, or a box filled with bean bags). • Encourage your baby's independence. When your baby can pick up small objects with the index finger and thumb, offer finger foods such as pieces of banana. Grasping food will build the muscles in the baby's hands and fingers. Your baby will feel good about doing things without help. Allow the baby to pull off socks and shoes, and give the baby a spoon to help feed him- or herself. How to help your baby's caregiver: Ask the caregiver to suggest some inexpensive household items that are safe play materials for crawlers and walkers.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
CRAWLERS AND WALKERS: 8 TO 18 MONTHS OLD	Crawlers and walkers can scribble with crayons and markers. • Give your baby large, nontoxic crayons and large pieces of scrap paper such as brown paper bags from the grocery store. At first, babies often put the crayons in their mouths, but show your baby how to use the crayons to make marks on paper. • Introduce large, nontoxic markers when your baby has learned to keep crayons out of the mouth most of the time.

TALKING ABOUT ME:

ACTIVITIES FOR TODDLERS

(18 to 36 Months Old)

WHAT DO TODDLERS DO?

- ❑ Learn new words every day.
- ❑ Speak using groups of words ("Ned go out").
- ❑ Take turns while talking with people.
- ❑ Ask many questions ("What that?").
- ❑ Name objects in picture books ("Ball").
- ❑ Follow two-part directions ("Pick up the socks and put them in the basket.").
- ❑ Say "no" and "not."
- ❑ Copy adult voices and actions.
- ❑ Follow simple stories.
- ❑ Look at books on their own.
- ❑ Join in when a book has rhymes and repeated words.
- ❑ Scribble with crayons and washable markers.

HOW DO TODDLERS LEARN?

Rosa tugs on Ms. Vega's arm and says, "Wet." Ms. Vega says, "Your diaper is wet. Let's go change it."

Rosa lies down on the changing table. Ms. Vega washes her hands and tells Rosa what she is doing. "I'm washing away all the germs so you will stay healthy. I'm taking off your shorts. They're red, like your sneakers." Rosa says, "Red sneakers."

Ms. Vega takes a diaper from the shelf. She replaces Rosa's wet diaper with a dry one. "All done," says Ms. Vega. "Wash hands?" asks Rosa. "Yes," says Ms. Vega, "let's wash our hands."

Rosa heads for the sink, singing. "This way, wash hands, wash hands, wash hands." Ms. Vega sings along, then says, "Rosa, you learned a new song to sing." "Sing song," says Rosa.

Like many toddlers, Rosa is learning about language:

- ❑ She communicates her needs using groups of words.
- ❑ She repeats words she hears adults speak.
- ❑ She learns a simple song.
- ❑ She asks questions.
- ❑ She answers questions.

Rosa's caregiver helps her learn about language:

- ❑ She responds to Rosa's request by answering with a group of words.
- ❑ She describes what she is doing and names a color--red.
- ❑ She asks a simple question that Rosa knows how to answer.
- ❑ She sings with Rosa, then congratulates her on learning the song.

ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR TODDLERS

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Listening and Talking Toddlers are learning to talk about the present, past, and future. • Young toddlers tend to talk about the present. "Me want cookie." You can help your toddler learn new words to talk about what he or she did in the past and will do in the future. "Yesterday you went down the slide at the park. That was fun." "Tomorrow we're going to the store. You can help push the cart." • Talk with your toddler about what happened during the day: "You had a busy day. This morning, you and Sam played in the sprinkler. You ate a peanut butter sandwich for lunch. After your nap we visited Poppy. What else did we do?" • Talk with your toddler about what you will do tomorrow. "I think it's going to be sunny tomorrow. What would you like to do?" How to help your toddler's caregiver: Ask the caregiver what happened during the day. Talk to your toddler about the day's events at child care while eating dinner or at bedtime.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Toddlers want to learn more about talking. • Some toddlers learn new words and phrases rapidly. Others still use gestures and sounds to tell their families what they want and need. Talk and read with your toddler, name the things the toddler points to, and tell the toddler the words he or she can use to make requests. "Say, 'Milk, please'." • Most toddlers understand more words than they can say. Give your toddler simple directions and praise the child for following them: "Please go to the bathroom and get your hairbrush." "Great! You got the brush. Now you can brush your hair."

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Toddlers use words to have fun and to learn. • Play make-believe with your toddler. You can pretend to talk on the phone, feed a doll or stuffed animal, or go shopping. Talk while you play, and encourage your toddler to talk back: "Brring, Brring. Hello. Yes, Todd's here. Would you like to talk to him? Okay, I'll give him the phone." • Offer props such as a doctor's kit to help your toddler talk about her fears. She can be the doctor, while you are the patient. "Oh good! That shot only hurt a little." • Say silly rhymes, such as, "The *bed* is on her *head.*" Make up nonsense words like, "It's time to *skidaddle* to bed." Add a new verse to a song: "...and on his farm he had a *pickle*..." • Ask your toddler silly questions to which the answer is "no"--one of every toddler's favorite words. "Do puppies wear pajamas?" "Is the sky green?"

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Reading Toddlers like listening to stories. • Have a special time for reading with your toddler every day. Some families read after dinner or as a part of their bedtime routine. Toddlers may want to read a favorite book--again and again--because they love the story and love feeling close to you. When they get older they will have new favorites. • Read when your toddler asks you to, so that your toddler will know that you think reading is important. If you can't stop what you are doing, suggest that the child look at a book alone for a while or ask another family member to read to the child. • Take your toddler to the library so that the child can pick out his or her own books. Keep the books in a special place at home so that they won't get lost or damaged. Watch for secondhand children's books to buy at yard sales and local bazaars. How to help your toddler's caregiver: Tell the caregiver about the books you and your toddler like to read at home. Ask for suggestions of books your toddler would enjoy. Look for these books at the library or borrow them from the child care program. Toddlers like to join in while you read out loud • Look for books that let your toddler do something such as touch and feel the pictures. Some books can be scratched and sniffed, or squeezed to make noises. Some books have pull-tabs that make things pop up or move to reveal hidden pictures. Books like these may wear out before your toddler gets tired of reading them. • Choose books with repeated words, rhymes, and phrases that your toddler can remember. If you read these books again and again, the child might join in at the right time and feel that he or she is reading too.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	• Ask your toddler questions about the pictures in a book. "Who's that?" "Where do you think he's going?" "What do cows say?" Have the child point to people and objects in the pictures. "Where's the...?" • Talk about your toddler's real-life experiences. "That looks like your raincoat. What did you do when you played in the rain today?" Toddlers like to look at books on their own. • Keep your toddler's books on low, open shelves or in an open box or basket on the floor so that the child can reach them without help. Stand the books upright so that the covers are easy to see. Keep books in different places--in the bag that goes to child care, in the bathroom, in the car, and next to the child's bed. • Suggest books your toddler might like to look at alone. The child can talk about the people and animals in a favorite book, make up a story about what's happening in a wordless picture book, or name the objects in a book filled with pictures. • Help your toddler learn to care for books. Show your child how to turn the pages so they won't tear. Remind your child to put away books after reading them. Some well-loved books will wear out. • Ask your toddler to help you fix his or her own damaged books. Your child can show you which pages are torn and hold the book open while you patch the pages.

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AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Building Muscles For Writing Toddlers can build the muscles in their fingers while playing with homemade toys. • Make a simple puzzle for your toddler by glueing a picture to cardboard and cutting it into five or six pieces. Provide dress-up clothes with buttons and zippers. Offer scrap paper to be torn. • Make play dough that your toddler can roll, pound, and squeeze. Mix together 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 1 cup water, and 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil. Put food coloring in the water if you like. Add more flour if the dough is sticky. Store in an air-tight plastic bag or container. • Let an older toddler borrow your safe kitchen tools--a wooden spoon, plastic knives and forks, a cookie cutter--to use with play dough. How to help your toddler's caregiver: Ask the caregiver for recipes for homemade fingerpaint and glue, and tips on using throwaways such as egg cartons and berry baskets as art materials for your toddler. Toddlers use the muscles in their fingers and hands to do things for themselves. • Plan your day so there's time for your toddler to wash, dress, and feed him- or herself. The child may take longer to put on sneakers than you do, but, "Me do it!" is a mark of pride. • Make your home toddler friendly. A refillable pump soap dispenser is easier for your toddler to use than a bar of soap, and a small plastic cup fits in the toddler's hand. Keep the child's toothbrush where he or she can reach it.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
TODDLERS: 18 TO 36 MONTHS OLD	Toddlers learn about writing by scribbling, watching you write, and seeing words around them. • Look for inexpensive large pads of paper and large, nontoxic crayons, and washable markers. Save scrap paper and paper bags. Keep a supply of drawing and writing materials where your toddler can reach them. • Ask your toddler to get some paper and crayons so you can write together. The child will learn about writing by watching you make a list, sign a check, or do a crossword puzzle. The child's scribbles are a way of copying what you are writing. • Talk to your toddler about the scribbles. "You made a line and a dot. This line is thicker than that one. You used two colors, red and blue." • Point to written words around you and read them out loud to your toddler. "Here comes our bus. It says 'Northside' on the front. That's where we're going." "These diapers are too small. We need a box that says 'over 30 pounds.'"

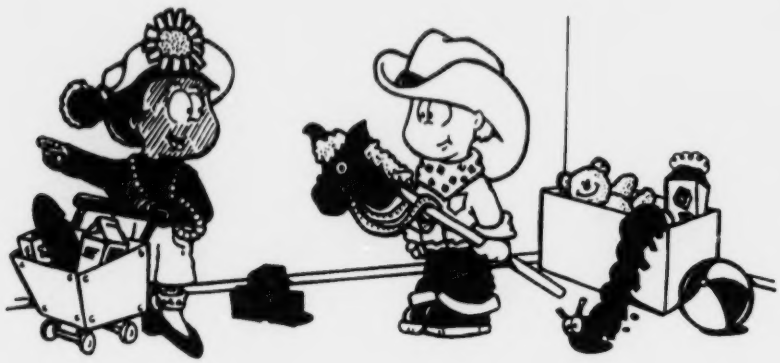
USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN:

ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOLERS

(3 to 5 Years Old)

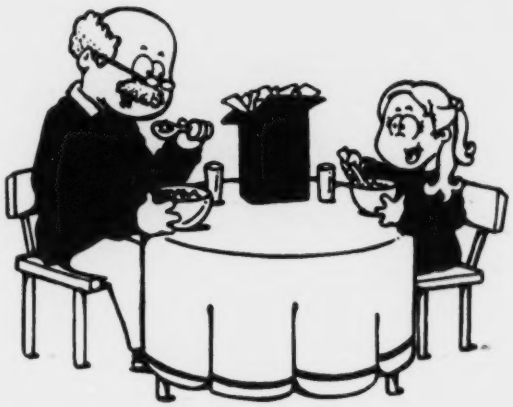
WHAT DO PRESCHOOLERS DO?

- ❑ Listen to stories and to conversations.
- ❑ Talk to adults and to other children in complex sentences.
- ❑ Master many rules of grammar.
- ❑ Make up silly words and stories.
- ❑ Use language to think, to share ideas and feelings, and to learn new things.
- ❑ Enjoy the same books over and over and look at new books.
- ❑ Retell familiar stories to themselves and others.
- ❑ Think about what the characters in a book might feel or do.
- ❑ Draw and write with pencils, crayons, and markers.
- ❑ See print around them and watch adults read and write.
- ❑ Imitate adult writing by scribble writing.
- ❑ Copy shapes and some letters.



HOW DO PRESCHOOLERS LEARN?

Gina bounces out of bed and hurries to the kitchen. She opens the cabinet, takes out a box of cereal, then puts it back. She takes out another box and says, "Grandpa, this is my cereal. It has a big 'P' and lots of stars."



Grandpa says, "That's good thinking." Gina points to a letter on the box, "That's a 'P'." She traces the letter in the air and says, " 'P' as in Peter. Peter's name starts with a 'P'. It's on his cubby."

Grandpa makes an offer. "Today, we can have our regular story time and then write together. I need to write a letter to a friend. You can write, too."

Gina puts her empty bowl in the sink and runs to find her mother. "Mom, I'm gonna read and write with Grandpa." Her mother says, "That sounds like fun. When I take you to family child care, I'll tell Ms. Jenkins that you like to write. You can write at her house and at home."

Like many preschoolers, Gina is learning language:

- ❑ She knows that letters (the P) and pictures (the stars) have meaning.
- ❑ She knows there is a 'P' on her cereal box and at the beginning of Peter's name.
- ❑ She knows that people take turns when talking to each other.

Gina's family helps her learn about language:

- ❑ They have a regular story time every day.
- ❑ Grandpa encourages her thinking, so Gina continues exploring the letters on the box.
- ❑ Grandpa offers to write with Gina.
- ❑ Mom talks to Ms. Jenkins, so that Gina can write at family child care and at home.

ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

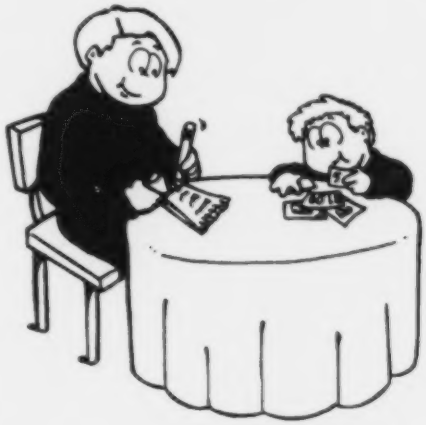
AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Listening and Talking Preschoolers learn about language by listening and talking. • Start a conversation with your child by asking a question that has no right or wrong answer: "What did you think when you saw the tall tower you built?" • Help your child become a creative thinker by asking, "Suppose that..." "What do you think..." "What if..." • Encourage your child to talk with older and younger family members. A child who has lots of opportunities to talk will learn how to put ideas into words. • Help your child choose a few special television shows that are just right for children of the same age and interests. Watch with your child and talk about what you see and hear. "Are those lions like the ones at the zoo?" Ask questions to find out what the child is learning. "Does our family do things like the family in the show? How are we different?" • Use television wisely. At family mealtimes, talk and enjoy each other's company. Make a list of things your child can do instead of watching television, such as looking at books, playing with brothers and sisters, or drawing pictures.

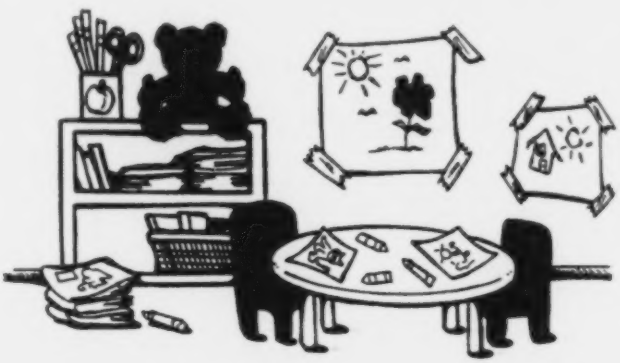
AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	**How to help your child's caregiver:** Tell the caregiver about the things your child does at home. Doing this will help the caregiver start conversations with your child and encourage your child to talk. Preschoolers learn about language by watching and listening to you. • Think and plan out loud so that your child can see and hear you using language to solve problems or make plans. "Hi Elliott. Are we still on for basketball?" "Great! I'll meet you at the park." • Visit and talk about interesting places. Go to the library, the park, or a museum. Talk with your child about what you see during the visit. Ask questions about what the child sees. When you return, suggest that the child tell a relative or friend about the trip. "Grandpa might like to hear about the giant insects we saw at the museum." • Ask your child to help you do a chore--replace a battery in a toy, wash the car, or pull weeds. Talk to the child about what you are doing. The child will have fun and learn some new words. • Take your child along when you do errands. The child will enjoy talking and learning with you at the supermarket, the laundromat, or wherever else you need to go. Children also like to look at what's happening in the neighborhoods along the way to and from these trips.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Reading Preschoolers like many different kinds of books. • Look for paperback versions of your child's favorite books, in English and in your family's home language. Encourage family and friends to swap books and give them as gifts. And remember that yard sales and neighborhood bazaars often have very inexpensive secondhand children's books. • Make regular trips to the library to borrow books, tapes, and other materials. If possible, have your child get his or her own library card. • Let your child see him- or herself in books. Choose books about families like yours and people from your culture and ethnic group. • Ask the children's librarian at your local library to suggest books for your child. Get ideas from other families, caregivers, and people who know your child well. • Look for books that match your child's experiences: *a special interest--bugs* *something familiar--going to child care* *a new event--going to the dentist* *a change in the family--the birth of a baby.* How to help your child's caregiver: Ask the caregiver about book clubs for young children and programs that offer inexpensive children's books.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Preschoolers are more likely to learn to love books if they are read to. • Set aside a time each day when you and your child can relax and read together. Make these special times when you enjoy each other's company and explore the new worlds and ideas found in books. Children who are read to are more likely to love books and to be strong readers. • Read with lots of enthusiasm. Change your voice to fit different characters and feelings such as sad, excited, or happy. • Expect and encourage interruptions. Stop to talk about the pictures and the story in each book, and the ways they relate to your child's life. Ask and answer questions. Add information to help the child understand the story. "Blueberries are easy to pick because they grow on low bushes. Remember when we saw blueberries in the supermarket?" Preschoolers learn about reading when they look at books by themselves and when they see adults reading. • Set up a reading shelf, basket, or corner where your child can reach books without help. Store books upright so that the child can easily find the one he or she is looking for. Almost any room in the home--kitchen, bathroom, living room, or bedroom--is a good place to keep books. • Bring along a bag of books when you leave home. Your child can read on the bus or subway, in a car, at the laundromat, and at the doctor's office. • Show your child that reading is an important and useful skill. Children love to imitate adults. A child who sees you enjoying a book or magazine will want to do the same. • Show your child how you use books, newspapers, and other written materials to find out what time a store opens, what the weather will be like, or what you need for a recipe.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Writing Preschoolers need to practice using the small muscles in their fingers and hands. • Encourage your child to do things such as brushing teeth, buttoning and zipping clothes, and using forks and spoons without help. • Ask your child to help you do real jobs, such as sorting and folding laundry, sweeping the porch, and making the beds. • Play with your child. Together you can thread beads on laces, do puzzles, and roll or pound homemade play dough. Ask your child's caregiver for ideas she or he may have. How to help your child's caregiver: Tell the caregiver about the real jobs your child does at home. Exchange samples of your child's writing with the caregiver so that you will both know what the child is doing and learning.

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Preschoolers learn about writing when they see how people use writing every day. • Let your child see you write every day. When you make a note on the calendar, write a shopping list, sign in at the doctor's office, or take down a telephone message, talk to your child about what you're writing: "I'm writing a letter to Aunt Alice. Would you like to tell her about our walk to the library?" • Show your child the words around us--cookbooks, shampoo, coupons, buses, street signs, and buildings--and illustrate their purpose. Hold up two cans of soup and say: "What kind of soup should we have--chicken noodle or vegetable?" 

AGE	ACTIVITIES
PRESCHOOLERS: 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD	Preschoolers like to do their own writing. • Make sure your child has writing materials and places to write. Look around the house for items your child can use for writing--any kind of paper, crayons, markers, pencils. Put the writing materials in an open box on a low shelf or in a bottom drawer in the kitchen so that the child can reach them without your help. • Set up a place for writing in the room where your family spends the most time. For example, you can shorten the legs on an old chair and table to make them the right height for your child, or you can often find secondhand, child-size furniture at thrift shops and yard sales. Keep catalogs and other writing materials in shoe boxes on the table.  • Talk with your child about how to write. If your child asks you how to make a letter, spell a name, or write a word, show the child how to do it. Otherwise, let your child write in his or her own way. You may not be able to read the writing, but the child can read it to you. Over time, the child will learn how to write words that others can read.

Reading and Writing Play Materials

Children learn about reading and writing in several ways. They watch adults, try out their own ideas, solve problems, and figure out for themselves how spoken and written words are connected.

Families can help by providing a special place where children can read and write and by encouraging them to include reading and writing in their play activities. Here are some examples of reading and writing materials for young children.

Create a Special Place With:

Table (homemade or purchased, sized for young children)
Chair(s)
Desk and chair
Low, open shelves
Bulletin board
Clothesline and clothespins (to hang up children's writing)

Explore Letters and Numerals With:

Magnet boards and alphabet and number magnets
Alphabet and numeral blocks, tiles, and puzzles
Alphabet and numeral sponges, stamps, and stamp pads
Alphabet and counting books

Play Make-Believe With:

Clipboards
Envelopes
Junk mail, catalogs, coupons
Magazines
Empty food containers
File folders and boxes
Mailbag and mailbox

Write With and On:

Chalkboards (wall and lap)
Chalk (white and colored)
Easels
Paint
Brushes
Paper (lined and unlined, different sizes, colors, weights, textures)
Markers (washable, nontoxic, thick and thin tips)
Crayons
Colored pencils
Erasable boards, markers, and erasers
Magic slates
Ready-made blank books
Bookbinding materials (stapler, hole punch, laces)
Scissors (for older toddlers and preschoolers)
Typewriter
Computer and developmentally appropriate writing programs

American Library Association's *Suggested Book List for Young Readers*

This *Suggested Book List for Young Readers* provides suggestions for books that you can introduce to children at different ages.* Although some of these books have been developed for a particular age, many are old favorites that can be enjoyed at any age.

BIRTH THROUGH EIGHT MONTHS

The following books have simple rhymes and poems.

Big Fat Hen, by Keith Baker

Ten, Nine, Eight, by Molly Bang

Play Rhymes, by Marc Brown

Goodnight Moon, by Margaret Wise Brown

Tomie DePaola's Mother Goose, by Tomie DePaola

Eye Winker, Tom Tinker, Chin Chopper: 50 Musical Finger Plays, by Tom Glazer

Rosie's Walk, by Pat Hutchins

Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young, by Jack Prelutsky

Have You Seen My Duckling?, by Nancy Tafuri

My First Mother Goose, by Rosemary Wells

EIGHT MONTHS THROUGH EIGHTEEN MONTHS

These books are short with a little text and many rhymes. At this age children really enjoy holding cardboard books and turning pages.

Moon Bear, by Frank Asch

Will I Have a Friend?, by Miriam Cohen

Corduroy, by Don Freeman

Where's Spot?, by Eric Hill

Mama, Do You Love Me?, by Barbara Joose

Peter's Chair, by Ezra Jack Keats

Pat the Bunny, by Dorothy Kunhardt

Clap Hands, by Helen Oxenbury

Seven Blind Mice, by Ed Young

"More, More, More" Said the Baby, by Vera Williams

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* The U.S. Department of Education recommends that parents review this list and make their own decision on the suitability of the books for their children.

EIGHTEEN THROUGH THIRTY-SIX MONTHS

These books have more text and an easy-to-follow story that moves along quickly.

The Little Red Hen, by Bryon Barton

Clifford the Big Red Dog, by Norman Bridwell

Wait Till the Moon is Full, by Margaret Wise Brown

Stellaluna, by Jannell Cannon

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle

Millions of Cats, by Wanda Gag

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, by Bill Martin Jr. and Lois Ehlert

Curious George, by H.A. Rey

The Cat in the Hat, by Dr. Seuss

The Bunny Planet, by Rosemary Wells

THREE TO FIVE YEARS

At this age children can enjoy more complex stories and understand humor.

Country Mouse and City Mouse, by Jan Brett

Stone Soup, by Marcia Brown

The Three Bears, by Paul Galdone

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins, by Eric Kimmel

The Story of Ferdinand, by Munro Leaf

Make Way for Ducklings, by Robert McCloskey

Tikki, Tikki, Tembo, by Arlene Mosel

The Tale of Peter Rabbit, by Beatrix Potter

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble, by William Steig

Lyle, Lyle Crocodile, by Bernard Waber

This reading list was developed at the American Library Association (ALA) under the Born to Read Project, which builds partnerships between librarians and health care providers to reach out to new and expectant parents and help them raise children who are "born to read."

Resources

AMERICA READS CHALLENGE: *READ*WRITE*NOW!* PUBLICATIONS

The following AMERICA READS CHALLENGE: *READ*WRITE*NOW!* publications have been placed on the U.S. Department of Education's Internet Web site <http://www.ed.gov> for your unlimited use.

- READ*WRITE*NOW! Basic Kit: Activities for Reading and Writing Fun
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Partners Tutoring Program
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Early Childhood Kit (of which this booklet is a part)
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Just Add Kids: A Resource Directory of Learning Partners, Reading Sites, and Other Literacy Organizations That Serve Children and Their Families
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Learning to Read, Reading to Learn: Helping Children with Learning Disabilities to Succeed

FEDERAL SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH FIVE

Corporation for National Service
Training and Technical Assistance, Rm. 9821
1201 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20525

Even Start
U.S. Department of Education
Compensatory Education Programs
Office of Elementary and Secondary Ed.
600 Independence Avenue SW
Room 4400-Portals Building
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Title I
U.S. Department of Education
Compensatory Education Programs
Office of Elementary and Secondary Ed.
600 Independence Avenue SW
Room 4400-Portals Building
Washington, DC 20202-6132

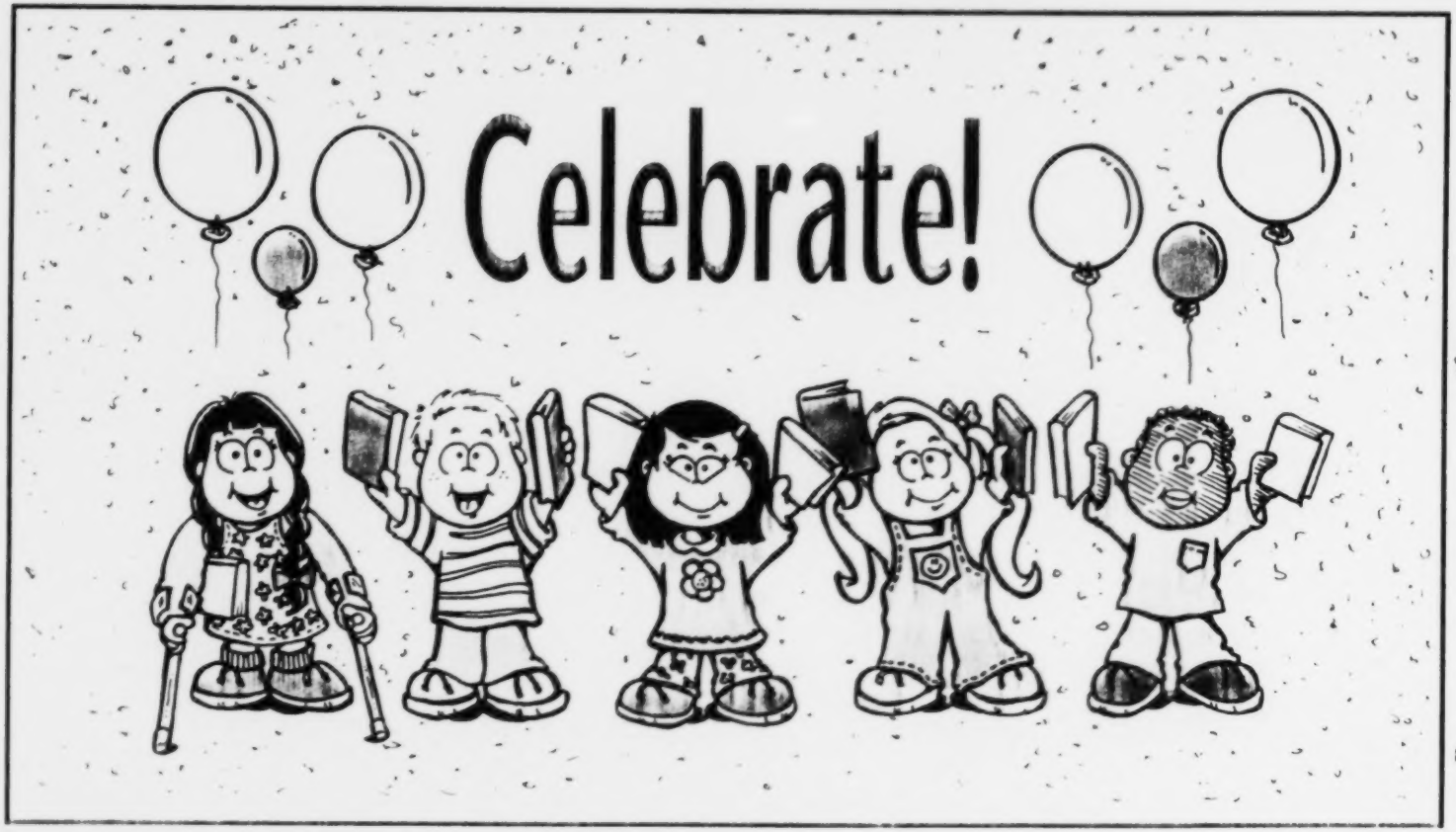
Head Start
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Public Affairs
370 L'Enfant Promenade SW
Washington, DC 20202

Child Care Bureau
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Public Affairs
370 L'Enfant Promenade SW
Washington, DC 20202

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health
Building 31, Room 2A32, MSC-2425
31 Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-2425

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013

Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue SW
Switzer Building, Room 4613
Washington, DC 20202



AMERICA READS CHALLENGE

READY★SET★READ

1997-1998 EARLY CHILDHOOD ACTIVITY CALENDAR

A Joint Project of the U.S. Department of Education, the Corporation for National Service, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Books and Beyond.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

June Tip of the Month

Encourage children to do things for themselves when they are ready. Let them feed and dress themselves, and clean up after themselves even if these tasks take more time and are not done perfectly.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Ask other friends or family members to share favorite stories with your child. Stories about the child's own history or culture are especially exciting. Ask the librarian to help you pick out books that have pictures and stories about people with the same ethnic background as your child.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Be a role model by checking out books that you would enjoy reading. When you get home, set aside a special time to read with your child.

Fruity Fan

Help your child make a colorful watermelon fan to keep cool all summer!

Materials:

- *paper plate*
- *crayons, markers, or paint*
- *watermelon seeds (if available)*
- *popsicle sticks*

Color or paint a one inch circle of green around the edge of a paper plate. Leaving a small ring of white next to the green, color the inside of the plate red. When the paint is dry, draw black seeds in the red center, or glue on real watermelon seeds. Glue a popsicle stick on the back of the plate and use as a fan.

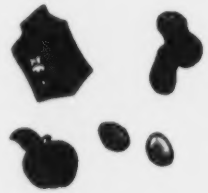
Rhyme 'N' Play

Touch the body parts named as you sing the words. Repeat the rhyme over and over, going faster each time.

Head, shoulders,
Knees and toes,
Knees and toes,
Head, shoulders,
Knees and toes,
Knees and toes.

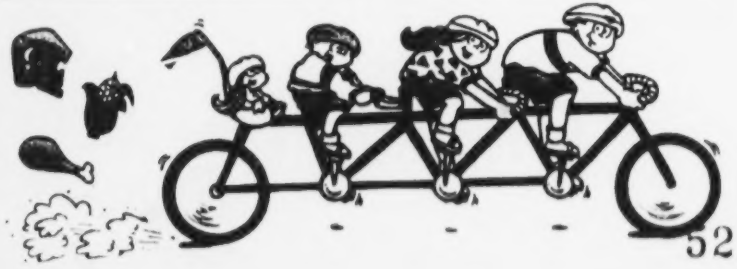
Eyes and nose
and ears and mouth
Head, shoulders,
Knees and toes,
Knees and toes.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Cut out a food pyramid from the side of a cereal box or other food. Talk about the different food groups. Ask your child to name a favorite food and what food group it belongs to. 1	2	Story Time 3	Print the letters in your child's name. Ask him or her to name three words that begin with each letter of the name. 4	5	6	Library Outing 7
Fruity Fan 8	Story Time 9	Play "Peek-a-Boo" with your child, hiding behind a favorite book. Finish your game by reading the story. 10	Rhyme 'N' Play 11	Help your child cut pictures of healthy foods out of a magazine. Have the child glue the pictures on paper plates. Make a mobile by hanging the plates with yarn to a clothes hanger. 12	13	*Flag Day* Let your child draw a flag on a piece of paper. Attach a stick to one end, turn on the radio to lively music, and let your child march around the house carrying the flag. 14
Father's Day 15	Help your child make a book for someone special, drawing pictures showing what your child likes about this person. Write down what the pictures are about. Share it with the special person. 16	17	Have your child look in a mirror and name the features on his or her face. Ask your child what each part does, and whether the child has one or two of each part named. 18	19	Story Time 20	Library Outing *First Day of Summer* 21
Take your child outside with a bucket of water and a paint brush to "paint" his or her name, and to draw shapes and letters on the sidewalk with the water. 22	23	Have a pretend phone conversation with your child, asking what your child did yesterday, is doing today, and wants to do tomorrow. 24	Story Time 25	26	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 27	Fruity Fan 28
29	Rhyme 'N' Play 51 30					



JUNE

1997



Steppin' to the Beat

July Tip of the Month

Teach children songs, poems, and rhymes. Encourage them to dance, sing, and clap their hands to the music or words.

Special Activity Center

Rhyme 'N' Play

Let your child dance while you sing together.

Here we go 'round the mulberry bush,
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush.
Here we go 'round the mulberry bush,
So early in the morning.

Repeat using:
This is the way we wash our clothes.
This is the way we scrub the floor.
This is the way we sweep the house.
This is the way we bake our bread.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Each time you open a book with your child, you take the child on an exciting journey. Open a world of new ideas in books and give your child a great start to learning. Remember, one of the best ways to encourage a love of reading is to have a regular time for sharing books with your child.

Puppet Making

Read or tell a story. Ask your child to pick out a favorite character and to explain the choice. Using a paper bag, crayons, magic markers, glue, construction paper or other materials, make a puppet of that character. Help your child retell the story using the puppet. Each week a new "character" can be created. By the end of the month you will have a collection of puppets your child can use to make up his or her own stories!

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child, take him or her to the children's section, and let your child pick out books to take home, read, and return during the next visit.

JULY 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Play music and dance with your child. Let your child use pots, pans, and spoons to create sounds. 1	2	Story Time 3	*Independence Day* Find a place to safely watch a fireworks display with your child. Talk about why you are proud to be an American. 4	Library Outing 5
Puppet Making 6	Take a "counting" walk. Pick something to count (cars, signs, flowers, birds, bikes) and as you walk, keep track of how many you see. 7	8	Play "Pat-a-Cake" with your child. Help your child count how many fingers there are on each hand. 9	Rhyme 'N' Play 10	11	Go for a reading picnic under the stars. Take a flashlight, a snack, and a few favorite books to read outside. Look for pictures that the stars make in the sky. 12
13	14	Sing "Old McDonald Had a Farm" with your child. Take turns making the animal sounds. 15	Rhyme 'N' Play 16	17	Watch a musical on TV with your child. Talk about what your child's favorite part was. Try to talk by singing. 18	19
Puppet Making 20	Let your child help with a household chore today, setting the table, emptying the trash, putting away the toys, or feeding a pet. When the work is done, thank your child for helping. 21	22	Story Time 23	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 24	25	Library Outing 26
Go somewhere you can play in the water today– a pool, a lake, the ocean, or under a sprinkler. 27	Story Time 55 28	Sing a simple song with your child. Count the words that rhyme. Make up a new song of your own using words that rhyme. 29	30	Rhyme 'N' Play 31		

August Tip of the Month

Talk with children as you play and do daily activities together. Ask your child lots of questions and be sure to listen to the answers.

Special Activity Center

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find out the days and times of special activities or story hours for children that take place in August. Mark the dates on your calendar so you will remember to attend!

Bubble Time

Ingredients:

- *1/8 cup dishwashing liquid*
- *1 cup water*
- *bubble wand*

Mix soap and water in a plastic container. Let your child dip a bubble wand in the liquid and blow or run holding the blower against the wind.

Wand Ideas:

* *Straw*–Cut a drinking straw in half; then cut the tip 3 times and fold pieces back. Dip the tip in the bubble solution and blow!
* *Soda-Can Rings*–Cut one of the plastic rings off the plastic soda can holder. Tape to a wooden stick or pencil. Dip in the mixture and wave through the air.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Find a quiet, well-lit spot where you can sit comfortably with your child. Let the child pick out a book (even if it's the same one over and over) and enjoy spending time with your child in an imaginary world!

Rhyme 'N' Play

If you're happy and you know it,
Clap your hands! (Clap, clap.)
If you're happy and you know it,
Clap your hands! (Clap, clap.)
If you're happy and you know it,
Then your face will surely show it,
If you're happy and you know it,
Clap your hands! (Clap, clap.)

Add other verses, using motions that fit the words:

* *If you're sleepy and you know it, Close your eyes.*
* *If you're sad and you know it, Cry "Boo hoo!"*
* *If you're mad and you know it, Stamp your feet.*

AUGUST 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Bubble Time 3	4	Make "Bugs on a Log" for a snack. Fill celery sticks with peanut butter and top with raisins. Go on a nature walk and see how many real bugs your child can find. 5	Rhyme 'N' Play 6	Play a game of leap frog. Measure how far your child can "hop." 7	Play "Hide and Seek" with your child. Hide an object and give your child three easy-to-follow clues to find it. Congratulate your child for listening and following directions when he or she finds the object. 1	Library Outing 2
Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 10	11	Story Time 12	Make up a song or rhyme using your child's name. Let your child add motions to the song as you sing it. 13	14	Have a family movie night at home. Pop popcorn and talk about your child's favorite part of the movie. Ask your child what was real and what was pretend. 15	Library Outing 16
Story Time 17	Have your child try to name five things that start with the letter "F," then five things that start with "U," then "N." Write down the words the child mentions. Then write the letters "FUN" to show your child how much fun letters are! 18	Rhyme 'N' Play 19	20	Play "Pat-a-Cake" with your child. 21	22	Fill a low shelf or drawer with safe toys, books, or empty containers for your child. Write your child's name on a piece of paper, let your child decorate it, and then tape it to the "special" place. 23
24 Bubble Time 31	Story Time 59 25	Count something with your child using the rhyme, "One potato, two potato, three potato, four. Five potato, six potato, seven potato, more!" 26	27	Rhyme 'N' Play 28	Play "catch" with your child. Stand a short distance from the child and toss or roll a large ball back and forth. Count aloud each time someone catches the ball. 29	Library Outing 60 30

September Tip of the Month

Take toddlers and preschoolers to the library so that they can choose books to read. Find out about the library's special books and services.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. When you are reading a book, magazine, or newspaper, give your child his or her own book or page to look at. Looking at books that don't have words still counts as "reading."

Create a "Me Book"

Make a book with your child. Have your child draw a self-portrait, a family picture, a favorite animal, a hand and a foot print, and a birthday cake to record his or her birthday. Include anything that helps the child tell his or her life story. Ask your child to tell you the story or ideas that go with each picture and record them at the bottom of each page. Join the pages together with yarn ties or brads. Let your child color the cover.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand and body movements to go with the words. Let your child follow along.

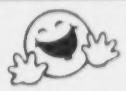
Mary had a little lamb, little lamb,
little lamb.
Mary had a little lamb, whose fleece was white as snow.

It followed her to school one day, school one day, school one day.
It followed her to school one day,
which was against the rules.

It made the children laugh and play, laugh and play, laugh and play.
It made the children laugh and play,
to see a lamb at school.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Look for books that are written for children who are your child's age. Even babies enjoy picture books, especially ones made out of cloth. If you need help, ask a librarian to help you find just the right books!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Labor Day Go for a walk and collect flowers. Ask your child to think of words, other than "flowers," that start with the letter "F." 1	Rhyme 'N' Play 2	3	Show your child how to spell his or her full name, street address, town, city, and phone number. Repeat this information often so that he or she can memorize it. 4	5	Create a "Me Book" 6
Visit a bakery. Read the signs in the store. Share the smells and tastes of a special treat. 7	*Grandparent's Day* 8	Let your child use your keys to open the door to your house or car. Talk about other things or places that use keys (treasure chest, diary, padlock, jewelry box, bike lock, safe, stores, and offices). 9	10	Story Time 11	Take a reading picnic under the stars. Take a blanket, some popcorn or other treat, a flashlight, and a favorite storybook. When you finish your story, find pictures stars make in the sky. 12	Library Outing 13
Create a "Me Book" *Rosh Hashanah* 14	15	Story Time 16	17	Play music and dance with your child. Let your child use pots, pans, and spoons to create sounds. 18	 Rhyme 'N' Play 19	Play "Peek-a-Boo" with your child, using a favorite book to hide behind. 20
Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 21	*First Day of Autumn* 22	*Yom Kippur* 23	Rhyme 'N' Play 24	25	Make up a story with your child as the main character. Let the child retell the story to you. 26	Library Outing 27
63 28	Talk with your child about the difference between hot and cold, big and small, open and closed, and other opposites. Help your child find or think of examples for each word. 29	Story Time 30				

SEPTEMBER

1997

October Tip of the Month

Keep a supply of books and other reading materials where children can reach them. Add new books as children's skills and interests change.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Children love stories! Whether you read a story or tell a story of your own, your child is learning how to imagine, and how words communicate ideas. The most important thing you can do as you share a story with your child is to make it an enjoyable experience for you both.

Cook with a Book

Read or tell the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." Let your child help make the porridge using the recipe below, or one on a hot cereal box.

Three Bears' Breakfast Porridge:

- *3 cups water*
- *1/2 cup raisins*
- *2 cups oatmeal*
- *1/4 teaspoon salt*
- *milk, brown sugar, & cinnamon*

Add salt and raisins to water and boil. Add oatmeal. Stir and cook 5 minutes. When the porridge is "just right," serve with milk, brown sugar, and cinnamon.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand motions to follow along with the words of the rhyme.

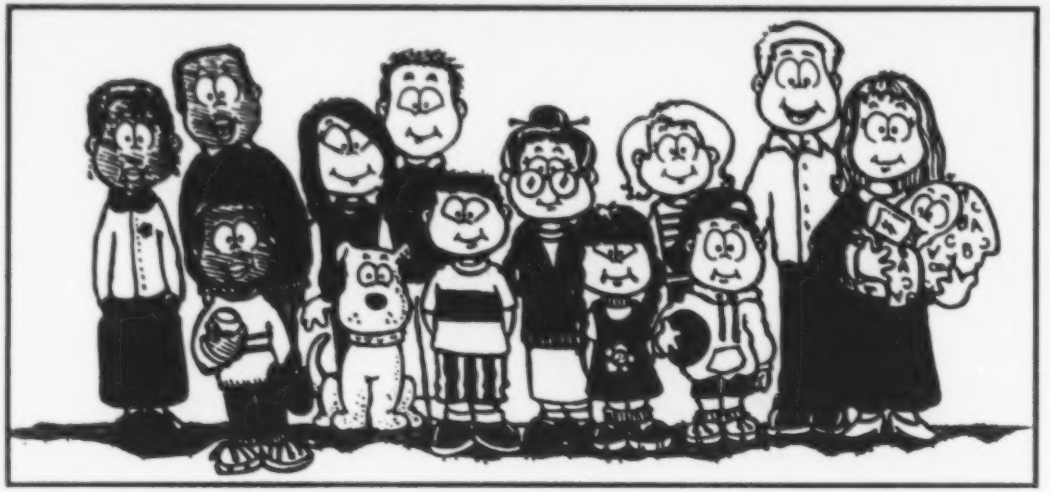
Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the water spout.
Down came the rain and washed the spider out.
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain.
And Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the spout again.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find a book on tape and a tape player that can be checked out. Plan a special family time to enjoy listening to the tape together. If you have your own tape recorder, you can record yourself reading the library books so your child can enjoy them later.

OCTOBER 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			Story Time 1	2	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 3	4
Cook with a Book 5	6	Find several boxes of different sizes. Have your child line them up from smallest to largest. See if the child can stack the boxes without having them fall. 7	Rhyme 'N' Play 8	Read a story to your child. In the middle of the story, have the child pretend to be the author. Ask how he or she would end the story. 9	10	Library Outing 11
12	*Columbus Day* This is the day we celebrate the discovery of America. Talk with your child about an imaginary voyage the child would like to take. What would your child like to discover? How would your child get there? 13	Story Time 14	Plan "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud, play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 15	16	Rhyme 'N' Play 17	Make a pumpkin face. Color a paper plate orange. Glue a green scrap of paper to the top for a stem. Let your child color a face on the "pumpkin." Print your child's name on the back of the plate. 18
19	20	Sing a song! Teach your child the songs or rhymes you loved as a child. Help your child make up a silly song. 21	Story Time 22	Play "Peek-a-Boo" hiding behind your child's favorite book. 23	24	Library Outing 25
Cook with a Book 26	67 27	Rhyme 'N' Play 28	29	Story Time 30	*Halloween* Make up your own silly, funny, or scary story. Ask your child to tell how his or her story can end happily-ever-after. 31	68



We Are Family

November Tip of the Month

Point out to children the printed words at home, child care, and in the community.

Special Activity Center

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Pick out books that have lots of colorful pictures or photographs and few words. Let your child look at the pictures and tell you what he or she thinks is happening in the story.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. A child who looks at books and hears stories read, learns that words and ideas can be written down, and that marks on paper have meaning. Show your child that there are things to read everywhere. Make a game of finding things with words on them (like soup cans, cereal boxes, comics). This will help your child to see how important it is to be able to read.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand movements to go with the words. Let your child follow along.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.

Star light, star bright
First star I see tonight.
I wish I may, I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight.

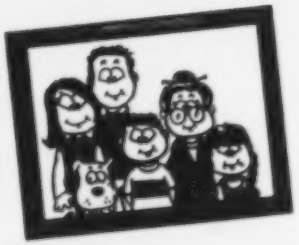
Turkey Placemats

Materials:

- *construction paper*
- *crayons or colored markers*

Trace your child's hand on the paper. Help your child make a "turkey" by coloring the fingers different colors for feathers. Add feet, eyes, and a beak. Print your child's name in the center of the turkey. Let the child decorate around the outside edge of the paper. Each time you make a new "turkey" the child can print another name of family or friends, until there are enough turkeys to use at your Thanksgiving meal.

NOVEMBER 1997



'SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						Library Outing 1
Help your child write a poem about your family. Be creative. Start each line with a letter from the word "family." Encourage the child to draw a picture to go with it. 2	Story Time 3	*Election Day* Have a "Family Election." Read two books together. Have each person vote for his or her favorite book. Count up the votes. Which book wins? 4	5	Rhyme 'N' Play 6	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud, play games, or listen to music with your child. 7	8
Turkey Placemats 9	Help your child make a puzzle. Cut up a pretty card or magazine cover in large pieces. Encourage your child to put the picture back together. 10	*Veterans' Day* 11	Story Time 12	Cut straws into different lengths. Let your child line them up from shortest to longest. 13	14	Have a Recycling Day. Set aside everything that your family uses today that can be recycled. Talk about why recycling is a good idea. Take the things to a recycling bin. 15
Put on a family play. Dress up in costumes and act out a simple story. Pop popcorn for a snack afterwards. 16	17	Story Time 18	Every time your child has to climb up or down stairs today, count out loud with the child, each step he or she takes. 19	20	Rhyme 'N' Play 21	22
23 Turkey Placemats 71 30	Print out two sets of alphabet letters: one upper case (capitals), one lower case (small letters). Cut the letters out, mix them up and play a match-up game with your child (A-a, B-b, C-c). 24	25	Story Time 26	*Thanksgiving Day* At dinner, have each person mention one thing he or she is thankful for. 27	28	Library Outing 72 29

December Tip of the Month

Show children how you read and write every day to have fun and to get things done.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. The best way for your child to learn to love reading and books is to have a reading experience each day. Reading can be done anywhere—in a car, a fast-food restaurant, a bus, an office, in the park, or at home. Keep books or other reading material handy, so it's always an easy activity to choose.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand motions to go with the words.

Over the river and through the woods,
To Grandmother's house we go.
The horse knows the way to carry the sleigh,
Through the white and drifted snow.
Over the river and through the woods,
Oh how the wind does blow.
It stings the toes and bites the nose,
As over the fields we go.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Try to find books about a variety of holidays and traditions that are written for children. Find out if there are any special displays or activities planned for children this month that you could attend with your child.

King/Queen for a Day

Materials:

- *construction paper, glue, glitter, buttons, yarn, old jewelry, or any craft items you have.*

Measure around the top of your child's head. Cut a piece of paper to fit. Cut the bottom straight and the top in points to look like a crown. Let your child decorate the crown with craft items. Have the child trace or print his or her name on the back of the crown and then attach the ends. Let the child wear the crown for the day. What would he/she do as King/Queen?

DECEMBER 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Story Time 1	Set a red, a yellow, and a green apple on the table. Ask your child to name the colors. Cut the apples open and talk about how they have different colors on the outside, but are the same on the inside, just like people. Enjoy your snack! 2	Rhyme 'N' Play 3	Different people celebrate different holidays. Talk about your child's favorite holiday. What does the holiday celebrate? 4	5	Library Outing 6
Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games, do a puzzle, or sing songs with your child. 7	8	Story Time 9	Play the "colored food" game. How many foods can your child think of that are red? green? yellow? orange? What "color" foods did your child eat today? 10	11	Make a Family Collage. Let your child cut pictures out of a magazine of things the child does with your family. Glue them on a piece of paper with "My Family" written on top. 12	King/Queen for a Day 13
14	Rhyme 'N' Play 15	*Beethoven's Birthday* Play music and dance with your child. Let the child use pots, pans, and spoons to create sounds. 16	Story Time 17	Help your child memorize his or her full name and address. Talk about where the name came from and where your child was born. If you have a map, find the city you live in now and the places different people in your family were born. 18	19	Library Outing 20
King/Queen for a Day *First Day of Winter* *First Day of Kwanzaa* 21	22	Story Time *Hanukkah begins at sundown* 23	Watch a children's movie as a family. Talk about what makes the characters in the movie different from each other. 24	*Christmas* 25	Rhyme 'N' Play 26	27
Give your child an assortment of beans, buttons, or small stones to be sorted by color, size, or shape. When the sorting is finished, the child can glue the objects onto a card and give it to someone special. 28	75 29	Draw a picture of a clock. Point to the numbers and let your child tell you what the number is. Talk about what the child does at different times of the day and night. 30	*New Year's Eve* 31			

January Tip of the Month

Read with your children at a regular time each day and whenever they ask you.

Special Activity Center

Mystery Bag Search

Place small, safe objects that all start with the same letter (e.g., spoon, soap, straw, sock) in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag. Without your child peeking, let him or her guess what it is. Talk about what letter all the objects start with.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Children love to hear the human voice. Even babies find great comfort in listening to voices. What better way for them to hear you speak than through reading to them! In fact, one of the best ways to encourage a love of reading is to have a regular time for sharing books with your child each day.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Follow the motions with your child.

Hands on shoulders, hands on knees,
Hands behind you,
If you please.

Touch your shoulders, now your nose,
Now your hair,
And now your toes.

Hands up high as before,
Now clap your hands,
One-two-three-four!

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. If you don't already have a library card, apply for one so that you can check out books and magazines (some libraries will even let you check out toys, videos, and tapes). January is a great month to look at books on weather.

JANUARY
1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				New Year's Day 1	Mystery Bag Search 2	Draw a face on both of your child's index fingers with a washable marker. Let your child retell a favorite story with the "puppet fingers" as the characters. 3
4	Story Time 5	Use an egg carton to teach your child how to sort. Give your child a variety of buttons, candy, or coins and let him or her sort them by color, size, or item. 6	Rhyme 'N' Play 7	8	Plan an indoor picnic for dinner. Let your child bring some favorite books to read. 9	Library Outing 10
Mystery Bag Search 11	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 12	13	Trace your child's hand on a piece of paper. Ask your child to think of different ways people can be kind to others. Write his or her ideas on each finger of the hand drawing. 14	Story Time *Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday* 15	16	*Benjamin Franklin's Birthday* Help your child learn to write his or her own name. Print it for your child to trace. Let him or her pretend to write and sign a very important message. 17
18	Story Time *Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday Celebrated* 19	Help your child name letters of the alphabet in the newspaper headlines or a magazine cover. Cut out five new letters for your child to keep and learn. 20	21	Have your child point out all the round-shaped things nearby. Have a round snack of banana slices, crackers, cookies, or tortillas. 22	23	Library Outing 24
Rhyme 'N' Play 25	79 26	*Mozart's Birthday* 27	Print the alphabet on a piece of paper. Point to each letter as you sing the Alphabet Song together. Let your child trace the letters. Pick out the letters used to spell your child's name. 28	29	Story Time 30	80 31

February Tip of the Month

Create a special place for children to read and write that is well lit and comfortable.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Start by choosing books that are written for children and have brightly colored, simple pictures. As you read, let your child point to the pictures and talk about what is happening to the characters and which character he or she likes best. Be sure to read with lots of enthusiasm so that your child can tell you're enjoying story time as well!

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find out the days and times of special activities or story hours for children that take place in February. Mark the dates on your calendar so you remember to attend.

Cookie Creations

Ingredients:

- *3/4 cup shortening*
- *1 cup sugar*
- *2-1/2 cups flour*
- *1 teaspoon salt*
- *2 eggs*
- *1 teaspoon baking powder*
- *1 teaspoon vanilla*

Mix shortening, sugar, one egg, and vanilla. Blend in flour, baking powder, and salt. Cover; chill one hour. Roll dough 1/8 inch thick on lightly floured board. Using cookie cutter, cut in desired shapes. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Mix one egg yolk with 1/4 teaspoon water, then divide into three containers. Add a different drop of food coloring to each container and mix. Using small brushes, paint the cookies. Bake 6-8 minutes in a 400 degree oven. You can also use ready-made cookie rolls and frosting from the grocery store.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Make up hand and body movements to go with the words. Let your child follow along.

I'm a little teapot,
Short and stout.
Here is my handle,
Here is my spout.
When I get all steamed up,
Then I shout,
Just tip me over
and pour me out.

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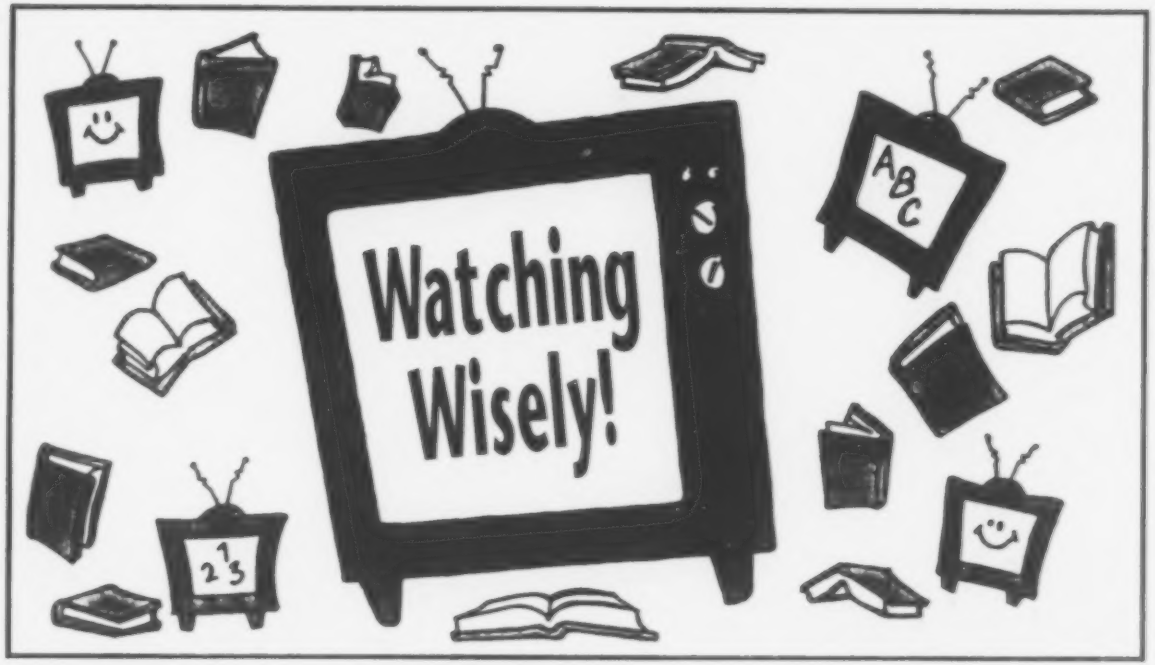
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Help your child write and send a letter to a friend. Decorate it with markers or crayons. 1	*Groundhog Day* 2	Let your child help set the table for dinner. Let the child practice counting out forks, plates, or cups. 3	Story Time 4	Make a story block. Draw or cut out pictures and paste them on all sides of an empty milk carton. Let your child tell stories by turning to the different pictures. 5	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 6	Library Outing 7
Cookie Creations 8	Rhyme 'N' Play 9	10	Make Valentines and send them to special friends. Either use purchased cards or make your own out of colored paper. Let your child write or trace his or her name on each. 11	*Abraham Lincoln's Birthday* 12	13	*Valentine's Day* Cut five different sizes of hearts out of paper. Mix them up and place them in a pile. Let your child line up the hearts from smallest to largest. 14
Name four things that begin with the "B" sound. Now create a poem or story using the four "B" words. 15	*Presidents' Day* 16	Teach your child the "Golden Rule" (treat others as you would like to be treated). Talk about what it means and how it can be followed. 17	18	Play the "Color Game." Point to solid-colored objects and ask your child what the color of each is. Repeat the name of the color and let your child guess the first letter in each word. 19	Story Time 20	21
George Washington's Birthday 22	Story Time 23	24	*Ash Wednesday* Play "Search and Match" with your child. Collect as many pairs of shoes as you can find in your house. Mix them up and place them in a pile. Let your child match up the shoes in pairs. 25	Rhyme 'N' Play 26	Talk about the difference between night and day. Let your child draw a "night" picture and a "day" picture. Print the words "day" and "night" on each. Let your child trace the letters. 27	Library Outing 28

FEBRUARY

1998



March Tip of the Month

Limit TV viewing to no more than two hours a night. Help children make other choices for their free time activities (e.g., reading, writing, playing, talking).

Special Activity Center

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find a quiet corner where you and your child can look at the books your child chooses. March is a great month to look at books that help your child learn about colors, numbers, or letters.

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Try "Story Time" just before bedtime. Let your child pick the books he or she wants to read. It will help your child settle down for sleep.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Follow the motions with your child.

Open, shut them,
Open, shut them,
Give a little clap!
Open, shut them,
Open, shut them,
Lay them in your lap.

Have your child stand in a safe place. Ask him or her to open and close eyes, then mouth, then hands. Have your child show you how he or she can open and close arms. Now repeat the rhyme.

Watch Me Grow

Materials:

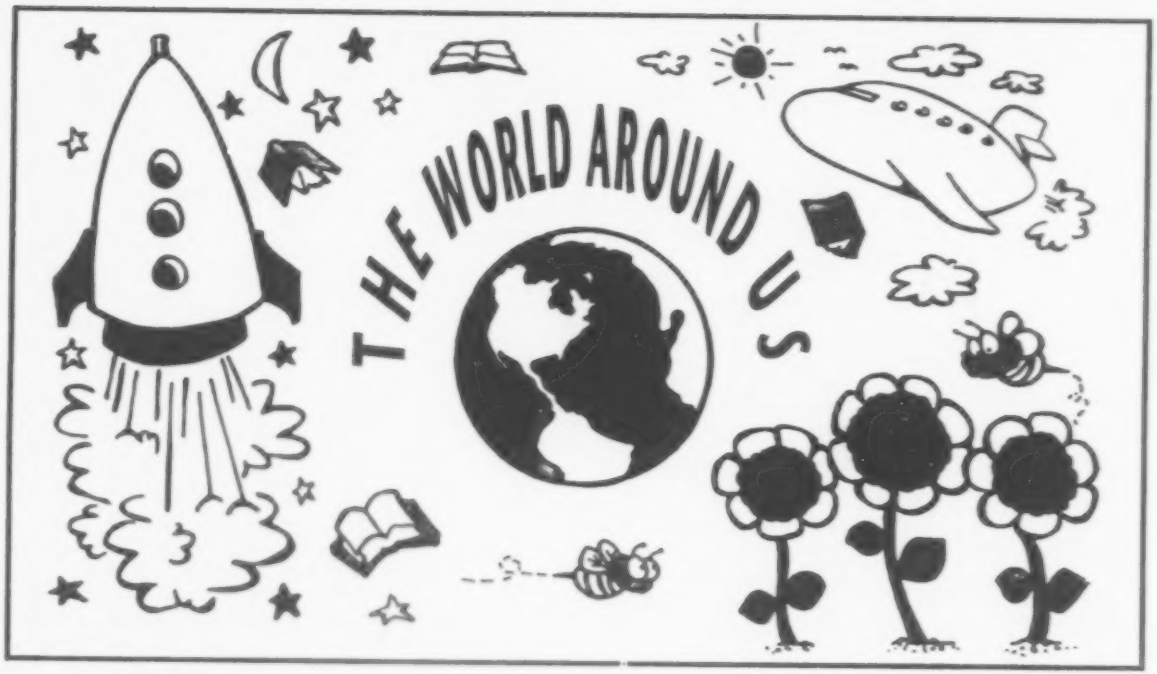
- *egg carton*
- *bean seeds*
- *potting soil*

Poke a small hole in the bottom of each cup and fill the cups with soil. Plant two bean seeds in each cup. Water the soil and put the cups in a sunlit place. Check every couple of days and water if the soil is dry. Every few days, check to see how the seeds are growing. Measure the sprouts and keep a record of their size on the lid of the egg carton.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	Rhyme 'N' Play *Dr Seuss's Birthday* 2	Print two sets of alphabet letters: one upper case (capitals), one lower case (small letters). Cut the letters out, mix them up, and play a match-up game with your child (A–a, B–b, C–c). 3	4	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 5	6	Library Outing 7
Help your child think of an imaginary land. Make up a story of silly characters who live in this imaginary place. 8	9	Story Time 10	With your child, count out the number of forks, spoons, napkins, cups, and plates needed for dinner and let your child set the table. 11	Rhyme 'N' Play 12	Watch a children's movie with your child. Talk about what is real and what is pretend in the movie after it is over. 13	Watch Me Grow 14
Rhyme 'N' Play 15	Plan a "green" dinner. Let your child think of green foods to serve (e.g., celery with cream cheese, green beans, lettuce, green apples, or cabbage) or add a drop of green food coloring to scrambled eggs. 16	*St. Patrick's Day* 17	Go for a walk with your child. Find a safe spot of dirt or sand and let your child draw shapes and letters in the ground with a stick. 18	19	Story Time *First Day of Spring* 20	21
22	Story Time 23	Watch an educational TV show with your child. Talk about the child's favorite part of the show. What new things did your child learn? 24	25	Play "Word Rhyme" with your child. Take turns thinking of silly words and saying as many words that rhyme as you can (e.g., fly, by, my, pie, why, sky, shy). 26	27	Library Outing 28
Watch Me Grow 87 29	Play "Pat-A-Cake" with your child. 30	31				

MARCH

1998



April Tip of the Month

Encourage your child to experience and discover new things. The more opportunities children have to see and do, the more they will understand the world around them.

Special Activity Center

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. Children who learn to love books will be children who grow up to be good readers. The very best time for children to learn to love books is while they are young. You can help them by making story time a regular part of their day.

Candy Crystals

Ingredients:

- *1 cup boiling water*
- *1 cup sugar*
- *1 pencil*
- *1 glass jar*
- *3 pieces of string*

Combine the water and sugar in a dish. Stir until the sugar is dissolved. Cool slightly. Carefully pour the water into a jar. Tie the string to a pencil. Balance the pencil across the top of the jar with the string hanging inside. Crystals will begin to grow in a few hours. Check every few days. Ask your child questions about what is happening. Does the candy feel hard or soft? Does it taste sweet or sour? Which is the shortest piece, which is longest? Is the candy growing fast or slowly?

Rhyme 'N' Play

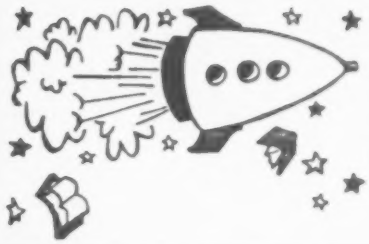
Follow the motions with your child.

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed,
One fell off and bumped his head.
Momma called the doctor and the doctor said, "No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Repeat using:
Four little monkeys
Three little monkeys
Two little monkeys
One little monkey jumping on the bed,
He fell off and bumped his head.
Momma called the doctor,
and the doctor said
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Library Outing

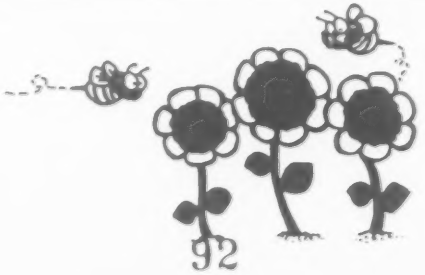
Visit the local public library with your child. Take your child to the children's section to pick out books to take home, read, and return during the next visit. As soon as children are able to write their name, they can apply for a library card of their own.

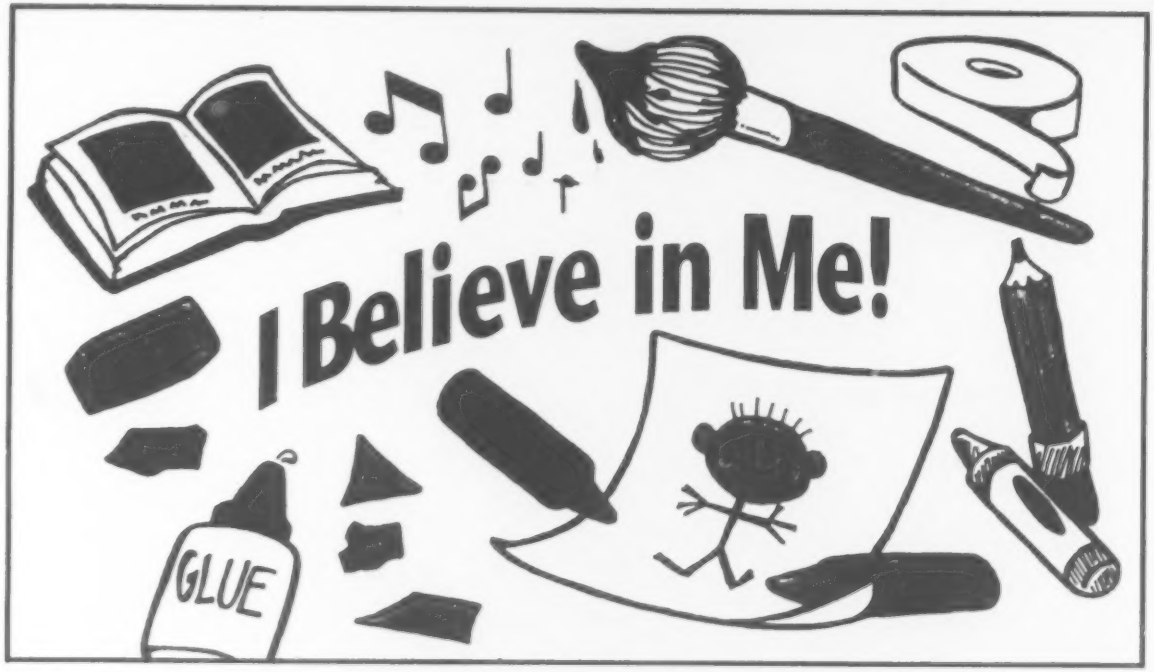


APRIL

1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			April Fools' Day Make your child laugh! Tell a joke, read a funny story or poem, sing a silly song, or draw a cartoon. 1	Story Time 2	Read or tell a favorite story with your child. When you finish, ask your child to tell you what happens first, second, and last in the story. 3	4
Story Time *Palm Sunday* 5	6	7	Play a game by counting how many square-shaped objects your child can find today. How many round ones? Which shape won (more squares or circles)? 8	Rhyme 'N' Play 9	*Good Friday* Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 10	Library Outing *Passover begins at sundown* 11
Easter Sunday 12	Rhyme 'N' Play 13	Help your child name the letters of the alphabet in newspaper or magazine headlines. Can your child find the letters of his or her own name there? 14	15	Cut the tops off of three carrots. Have your child place them in a shallow dish with 1/2 cup of water. Water daily. Have your child measure the green tops as they grow. 16	Candy Crystals 17	18
Story Time 19	Talk about a favorite family tradition with your child. What month is it celebrated in? Have your child name the months of the year with you. 20	21	*Earth Day* 22	Let your child help set the table for dinner. Practice counting out forks, plates, or cups. 23	*Arbor Day* 24	Library Outing 25
Help your child make a puzzle by cutting an old photo, greeting card, or calendar picture into large pieces. Let him or her put the pieces back together on a sheet of paper. 26	91 27	28	Story Time 29	30		





May Tip of the Month

Keep writing materials such as washable, nontoxic crayons and markers, paints and brushes, and different kinds of paper where children can reach them.

Special Activity Center

Lollipop Cookies

Ingredients:

- *3/4 cup shortening*
- *1 cup sugar*
- *2-1/2 cups flour*
- *1 teaspoon salt*
- *popsicle sticks*
- *2 eggs*
- *1 teaspoon baking powder*
- *1 teaspoon vanilla*

Mix shortening, sugar, one egg, and vanilla. Blend in flour, baking powder, and salt. Cover; chill one hour. Roll dough into a long log that is 2-1/2 inches wide. Refrigerate one hour. Slice in 1/4 inch circles; place on ungreased cookie sheet. Paint cookies by mixing one egg yolk with 1/4 teaspoon pqwater. Divide paint into three containers; add a drop of food coloring to each. Using small brushes, paint the cookies. Place a stick in the dough to create a "lollipop." Bake 6-8 minutes in a 400 degree oven. You can also use ready-made cookie rolls and frosting from the grocery store.

Library Outing

Visit the local public library with your child. Find out the days and times of special activities or story hours for children that take place in May. Mark the dates on your calendar so you can remember to attend!

Story Time

Have fun reading or telling stories with your child. As your child is having fun hearing the stories, you are helping the child learn to think, and put ideas and words together. Use different voices for the characters in the book, use a puppet or a stuffed toy to tell the story, or let your child "read" the book to you by looking at the pictures and making up the story.

Rhyme 'N' Play

Have your child follow along, holding up the number of fingers as you say the rhyme.

One, two,
Buckle my shoe.
Three, four,
Shut the door.
Five, six,
Pick up sticks.
Seven, eight,
Lay them straight.
Nine, ten, a big fat hen.

Now have your child jump or hop each time you say a number.

MAY
1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					May Day Make a bouquet of flowers out of opened-up cupcake liners. Write a message at the center of each flower for someone special. Glue or tape a straw or popsicle stick for a stem. Tie the flowers together with a ribbon. 1	Library Outing 2
Read the newspaper comics with your child. Let your child choose a favorite one to cut out, and have your child tell you what is happening in the picture. Your child can even make up a story to go with the pictures! 3	4	Story Time *Cinco de Mayo* 5	6	Rhyme 'N' Play 7	Help your child make an indoor fort using a sheet, blanket, or towel. "Build" it over chairs. Let your child read books with a flashlight inside the fort. 8	9
Lollipop Cookies *Mother's Day* 10	Plan a "TV Blackout" night. Instead of watching TV, read aloud or play games with your child. 11	Rhyme 'N' Play 12	Cut the letters in your child's name out of a magazine. Let your child glue the letters in the right order on a piece of paper. He or she can also cut out pictures to decorate around the name. 13	14	15	Let your child use chalk to make sidewalk drawings. Draw a circle and a square. Ask your child to draw animals out of the shapes. 16
Go for a nature walk. Take an empty egg carton to collect treasures along the way. Later, let your child glue the things that have been collected on paper and write the name next to each item. 17	Rhyme 'N' Play 18	Play the color game. Point to items around the house or outside and have your child tell you what color you are pointing to. 19	Story Time 20	21	Put together a costume box for your child. Have your child dress up in old clothes, hats, scarves, and shoes. Then, your child and friends can act out a favorite story or make up a new one! 22	Lollipop Cookies 23
24 Story Time 31	*Memorial Day (observed)* Sketch an American flag on a piece of paper. Tear up pieces of red, white, and blue construction paper and have your child glue the pieces onto the picture, making a "mosaic" flag. 25	26	Give your child a simple job to do, such as cleaning up toys, washing a sink, or feeding a pet. Have your child look at a clock at the beginning and the end of the job. Did the clock change? 27	Rhyme 'N' Play 28	29	Library Outing *Memorial Day (traditional)* 30

Acknowledgments

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Ellie Topolovac
Executive Director

Sue Holtkamp
Assistant Director

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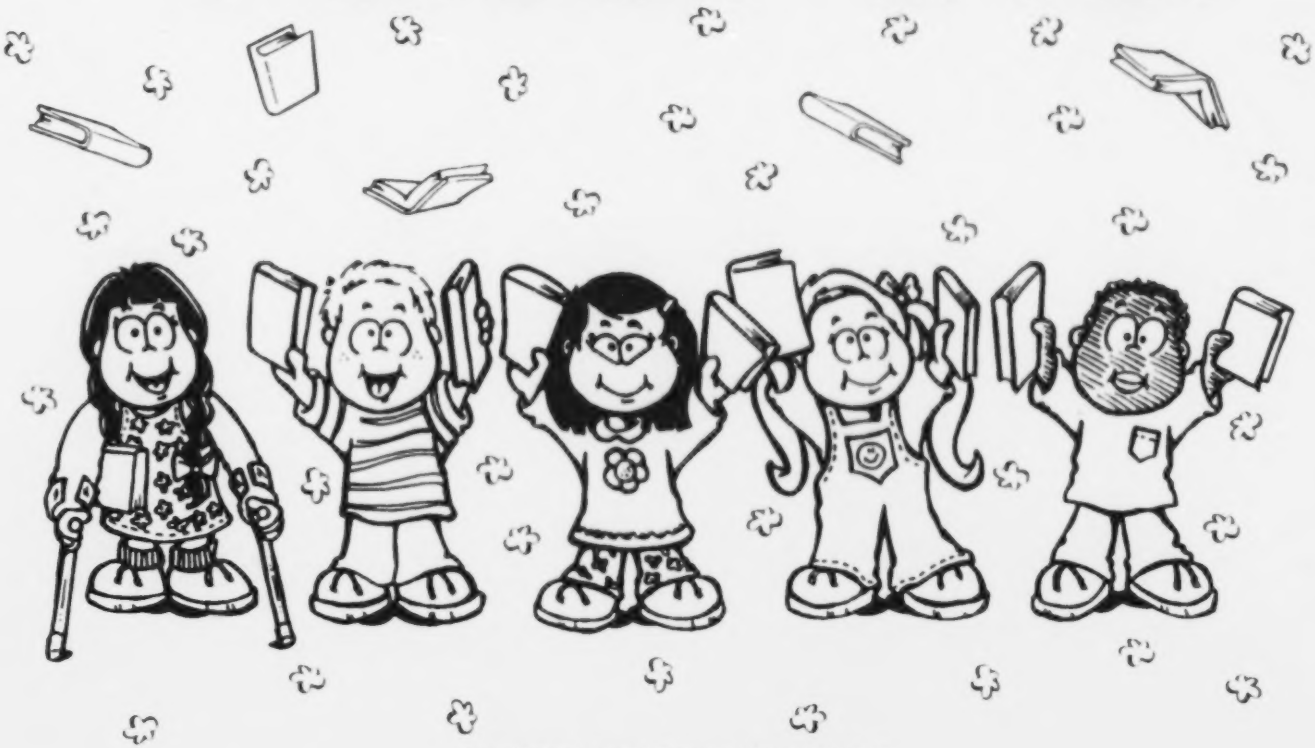
Celebrate!



AMERICA READS CHALLENGE

READY ★ SET ★ READ

EARLY CHILDHOOD GROWTH CHART

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55"
54"
53"
52"
51"
50"

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WHAT MANY CHILDREN DO IN LANGUAGE

Age		What many children do...	If you have concerns about your child's development, talk with a professional such as a pediatrician...
Young Babies	Newborn	Babies listen and respond to your voice and other sounds; they tell their feelings by cooing, gurgling, smiling, and crying.	★ If your 3-month-old does not respond to your voice and other sounds.
	3 to 8 months	Babies play with sounds and they babble to themselves. They use sounds to communicate (smiling at the sound of a happy voice, and crying or looking unhappy on hearing an angry voice). Babies can play peek-a-boo. They wave arms and kick feet to show excitement, and they enjoy being read to.	★ If your 8-month-old is not making several sounds or does not reach for and grasp objects.
Crawlers and Walkers	8 to 12 months	Babies understand and respond to gestures, facial expressions, and changes in tone of voice. If someone asks, "Where's Mommy?" babies will look for their mother. Babies understand simple words, such as "Da Da." Babies put books in their mouths and turn pages in sturdy books.	★ If your baby does not look at people who talk to him or her. If your baby is not pointing at or making sounds to get what he or she wants, like favorite toys.
	12 to 18 months	Babies say first words. They understand a few words and simple directions. They know their own names. They will give you a toy if you ask for it. Babies create long babbling sentences and look at picture books with interest.	★ If your 18-month-old does not say more than a few words clearly.
Toddlers	18 to 24 months	Toddlers put two or more words together to make short sentences like "want juice" or "car go." Toddlers learn new words quickly. They can copy adult sounds, words, and motions. Toddlers ask and answer simple questions. They can use crayons and markers for scribbling.	★ If your 20-month-old cannot follow simple requests, such as, "Come to Daddy." If your 24-month-old does not use two words together.
	24 to 36 months	Older toddlers listen to stories being read. They like to play pretend games. They love asking "why" questions. They use "no" and "not" a lot. Toddlers enjoy looking at picture books, turning pages, and naming objects they see. Their scribbling is becoming more like writing.	★ If your 2-year-old does not ask questions or respond to simple questions with "yes" or "no."
Preschoolers	3 to 4	Young preschoolers make comments and requests, and	★ If your 3- to-4-year-old does not use language

49" 48" 47" 46" 45" 44" 43" 42"

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years	tell others what to do. They can talk about things that happened and make up stories. They listen attentively to stories and retell stories themselves. They enjoy books that tell about real things as well as make-believe. They may revert to toddler behavior when feeling upset or shy. They make shapes such as circles and squares and pretend to write the way they have seen adults write.	freely, experiment with verbal sounds, and begin to use language to solve problems and learn concepts.
4 to 5 years	Preschoolers know the names and sex of family members and other personal information. They play with words and make up silly words and stories. They are beginning to draw figures that represent people, animals, and objects. They understand that pictures, numbers, words, and letters are symbols of real things and ideas. They "write" as a way to tell stories and offer information. They enjoy "reading" on their own. They may recognize a few words such as their name or words on signs.	★ If your child is embarrassed and disturbed by his or her speech, or if you or your child's caregiver have concerns about your child's language skills.
5 to 6 years	Children can recognize and reproduce many shapes, letters, and numbers. They are gaining control over writing and drawing tools. They understand that letters written on a page represent spoken words. They use invented spelling (tp for top, Mry for Mary). They dictate stories for others to write. They enjoy using computers.	★ Work with your child's teacher to assess his or her language skills through the elementary school system.

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN ABOUT LANGUAGE

Here are some activities to help your child learn about language. Do them for as long as your child enjoys them. Then add new activities as the child grows older.

Newborn to 3 months	Listen and talk to your baby throughout the day. ★ Find out what your baby's sounds and actions mean. Talk to your child about what he or she seems to be saying. ★ While feeding, diapering, and bathing your baby, take time to sing songs, say nursery rhymes, and smile and coo in response to the baby's smiles and coos. ★ Smile and praise your baby for learning something new.
3 to 8 months	Talk and play with your baby. ★ Use words and play actions when talking with your baby. ★ Play games with your baby, such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake, that teach your child about taking turns when communicating with another person. ★ Place a rattle in your baby's hand. Hold out a squeeze toy for your baby to grab. ★ Hand things to your baby and ask the baby to hand them back.
8 to 12 months	Read and tell stories with your baby every day. ★ Make reading a shared experience. Point to pictures and name the objects. ★ Provide books that are safe to touch and taste. Cloth, vinyl, and washable books are good for babies to handle. ★ When you read to your baby, hold the baby on your lap and hold the book so that the baby can see the pictures. ★ Use puppets, dolls, and other toys as story props.

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12 to 18 months	Provide play materials that match your baby's skill and interest. ★ Let your child "play telephone." Have a pretend telephone conversation. ★ Let your child play with pots, pans, wooden spoons, plastic containers, and other safe household items. ★ Arrange pillows and other objects on the floor for your child to crawl around or on and play with.
18 to 24 months	Help your toddler talk about the present, the past and the future. ★ Help your toddler learn new words to talk about what he or she did in the past and will do in the future. "I think it's going to be sunny tomorrow. What would you like to do?" ★ Discuss the day's events at bedtime. "Remember when we went to the park?"
24 to 36 months	Read books and do activities that let toddlers join in. ★ Play make-believe with your toddler. Provide props so that the toddler can play dress-up or doctor. ★ Arrange a special time for reading. ★ Respond to your toddler's request to be read to. ★ Read some of the same books again and again, and encourage your toddler to join in with the words he or she knows.
3 to 4 years	Provide books in English and in your family's home language. ★ Let your child see him- or herself in books. Choose some books about families like yours and people from your cultural and ethnic group. ★ Have a special place for books, magazines, and other reading materials in the home. Your child should be able to reach books without help in a reading corner and in other places around the home. ★ Help your child to create his or her own "This Is Me" album. Together with your child look at and talk about the family album, photographs, or special memorabilia.
4 to 5 years	Show your child how reading and writing are important in daily life. ★ Point out the print around you and show how it serves a purpose. Watch TV together and talk about books that relate to topics seen on TV. ★ Let your child see you enjoying a book or magazine often. ★ Encourage reading in different places. When you go out with your child, take books for the child to read in the car or on the bus.
5 to 6 years	Make sure that your child has writing materials and places to write. ★ Let your child see you write every day. ★ Put writing materials for your child—paper, pencils, crayons, markers, and chalk—in an open box on a low shelf so that the child can reach them easily. ★ Talk with your child about his or her writing. ★ If you cannot read the words your child has written, ask your child to read the writing to you. Over time, your child will learn how to write words that others can read.

32"

31"

30"

29"

28"

27"

26"

25"

A Joint Project of the Corporation for National Service, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

105

PLEASE HANG CHART ON THE WALL 2 FEET FROM THE FLOOR

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106